
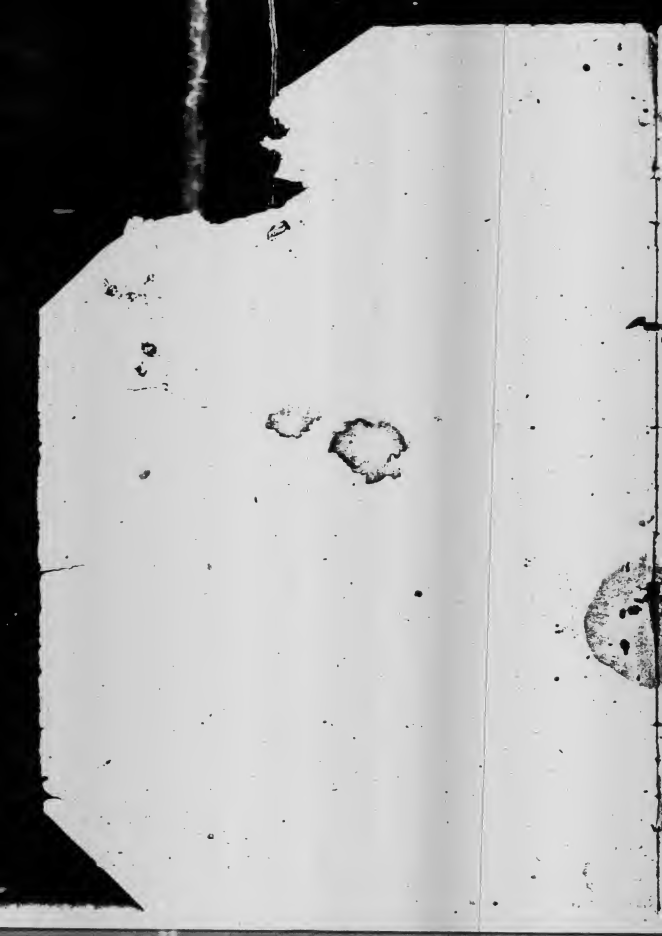


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Muscle Shoals Baptist Association



v. 1. 1850	v. 11. 1888
v. 2. 1854	v. 12. 1891
v. 3. 1855	v. 13. 1892
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v. 9. 1885	v. 19. 1899
v. 10. 1887	v. 20. 1900



PROCEED

OF THE

Muscle Shoals Association

OF BAPTISTS,

HELD WITH THE CHURCH AT MOULTON,

LAWRENCE COUNTY, ALABAMA.

Commencing on Friday the twenty-ninth day of September, 1854.

NASHVILLE, TENN:

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE "TENNESSEE BAPTIST,"
BY GRAVES & MARKS.

1854.



MINUTES.

FRIDAY, Sept. 29, 1854.

The delegates to the Muscle Shoals Association met with the Baptist Church of Christ at Moulton in Lawrence County, Ala., on Friday, Sept. 29th, 1855.

The Introductory Sermon was delivered by Elder Wm. H. Barksdale, from Isaiah, 21st chap., and 11th verse: "*Watchman what of the night.*" After intermission, prayer by Brother J. Gunn. R. B. Burleson in the chair as Moderator, and E. Windes acting as Clerk.

1. Letters from churches called for and names of delegates enrolled.

2. Went into election of Moderator and Clerk, which resulted in the choice of Elder R. B. Burleson as Moderator, and Elder E. Windes Clerk.

3. Appointed regular standing committees as follows: On devotional exercises—A. Houk, L. D. Massengale, G. Fowler, H. A. Owen and C. C. Gewin. On Missions—A. Houk, C. Gibson, C. C. Gewin, E. R. Stanley, A. Jarman and T. Ashford. On Education—J. Gunn, Wm. H. Barksdale, W. W. Wilhite and P. M. Musgrove. On Finance—C. Gibson, A. H. Stanley and G. Fowler. On Documents—D. Bridenthall, A. Johnson and J. Fields. On Sabbath Schools—A. Houk, J. C. Roberts and N. Baley. On the State of Religion—D. Bridenthall, Wm. J. Thompson and J. K. Lynn. On Fellowship—L. D. Massengale, H. Rieves and J. D. Clear.

Adjourned until Saturday morning 9 o'clock. Prayer by Brother Jennings.

SATURDAY MORNING, 9 o'clock.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Brother Lynn.

1. Called for report of the committee of arrangements, which was presented; read and adopted.

2. Called the names of delegates, and marked absentees.

3. Called for petitionary letter; five were presented, viz: New Friendship, Concord, Frankford, Duncan's Creek and New Hope, which were read, received, and the right hand of Fellowship extended by the Moderator.

4. Called for corresponding letters; two were received, one from Liberty Association, borne by Brother Pomroy, and one from Big Bear Creek, by Brother Wheelock, which were read and those brethren invited to seats with us. Also, received a package of Minutes from North River Association.

5. Invited visiting brethren to seats with us, and Brethren Edmiston, Vanhooose and Fuller came forward.

6. Suspended the regular order of business and appointed a committee to draft suitable preamble and resolutions expressive of our feelings on parting with Brother Edmiston, who is about to leave our Association, whereupon Elder J. Gunn, J. D. Massengale and P. M. Musgrove were appointed said committee. See Appendix F.

7. The President of the Board of Trustees of the Baptist Female Institute at Moulton presented a report which was read and ordered to be printed in the Minutes. See Appendix, B.

8. Delegates from the General Association were invited to seats with us, and J. N. Owen came forward.

9. Called for report of Missionary labor; three were presented, viz: From Brother Jennings for 1st district; Brother Verser for 2d district, and Brother Fields for the 4th district, all of which were read and referred to committee on Missions.

10. Called for report on Minutes, and a package of Minutes were presented and longer time granted to complete the file.

11. The following resolutions offered by Brother W. H. Barksdale, was received and adopted:

Resolved, That we change our Union meetings ^{E.} ~~cons~~ meeting (or Delegates where churches have new ^{the} ~~ing~~). The ostensible design of which shall be the ap- ~~pro~~ ^{tract} ~~ing~~ of protracted meetings and ministers to attend them.

Resolved further, That it shall be the privilege of each District at her respective meetings to appoint their own time and place hereafter for the holding of said meetings.

12. Appointed Minister's and Deacon's meetings in lieu of Union meetings, to be held as follows: 1st district, with Macedonia, commencing Friday before the 3d Sunday in April next; 2d district, with Enon, Friday before the 3d Sunday in May; 3d district, Mount Zion, Friday before the 3d Sunday in June; 4th district, Friday before the 1st Sunday in June at Harmony.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS.

1. Query No. 1. What course should a church pursue with a member who refuses to pay his Pastor or his proportional part of the church expenses? Referred to committee who recommends the following answer, which is adopted by the Association: It is the duty of the church to discipline such members, that is to deal with them for the sin of covetousness.

Query No. 2. What should be done with members who have moved off from their church without their letter, and lives for years in that condition and do not apply for letter of dismission?

Query No. 3. What should be done with a member who calls for his letter and gets it and will not join some other church of the same faith and order?

The Committee to whom was referred a question with regard to members, moving from their churches, without letters of dismission, Believe it would be advisable for the church or churches to address such members by letter, and require them to apply for letter's of dismission; and if they should fail to do so exclude them; and if such members place of residence or address should not be known by the Church, erase their names from the Church Book.

2nd. If any member receives a letter of dismission, and fails to join some other Church of the same faith and order, and refuses to comply with the requisitions of his Church, we believe it would be proper to excommunicate such. All of which is respectfully submitted.

WM. J. THOMPSON, Chairman.

Adjourned until half-past 1 o'clock, P. M. Prayer by Brother Wilhite.

THURSDAY EVENING, 1 1/2 o'clock, P. M.

met pursuant to adjournment.

1. The following resolution was read and adopted:

Resolved, That we require all newly constituted churches to express their views on Missions.

2. On motion, the following delegates were appointed to the General Association, viz: J. N. Owen, F. C. Owen, J. Gunn, E. Ellett, W. H. Barksdale, R. J. Jennings, R. B. Burleson, Wm. J. Thompson, L. D. Massengale and J. C. Roberts.

3. It was moved and seconded that delegates be appointed to corresponding Associations, whereupon the following appointments were made, viz: To Liberty—Wm. H. Barksdale, J. Gunn and Wm. J. Thompson; to Big Bear Creek—J. K. Lynn, R. J. Jennings and G. W. Harget; to North River Association—J. C. Roberts, J. Gunn and Wm. Harris; to Cherokee Association—J. Fields, M. A. Verser and W. W. Wellite; to Judson Association—H. A. Owens, Thos. Ashford and E. R. Stanley.

4. It was moved and seconded that a committee of three be appointed to define the duties and powers of the Executive Committee, whereupon J. Gunn, A. Houk and P. M. Musgrove were appointed said committee, after which D. Bridenthall was added to said committee. See Appendix, G.

5. Called for the Circular Letter, which, on motion, was read and ordered to be spread upon the Minutes. [Appendix, A.]

6. The committee on Fellowship presented their report, which was read and the subject was again referred to a committee of three, who were instructed to report on each item separately. A. Houk, G. D. Clear and C. C. Gwin were appointed said committee. See Appendix, E.

7. An invitation was given Brother J. R. Graves to a seat with us, which he accepted as the representative of the Tennessee Publication Society and the Southern Bible Board, located at Nashville, Tennessee.

8. The committee on the State of Religion presented their report, which was read and adopted.

9. The committee on Documents submitted ^{E.} ~~their~~ was adopted. Appendix H.

10. On motion, a committee of three were appointed to examine Brother Bailey and other applicants who wish to become beneficiaries at Union University. Thos. Ashford, J. Gunn and L. D. Mas-sengale were appointed said committee. Appendix, I.

11. On motion, New Prospect Church was granted a letter of dismissal according to her petition.

12. The Association agreed to convene next year with Mt. Pleasant Church, Lawrence county, Brother J. Gunn to preach the Introductory sermon, Brother Thompson his alternate, Brother Windes to write the circular letter, Brother Musgrove his alternate.

Adjourned until 8 o'clock Monday morning.

SABBATH EXERCISES.

Brother J. R. Graves preached in the forenoon to a very large and attentive audience. The afternoon sermon was preached by Brother Bridenthral, who also had a very large and attentive congregation. Brother Barksdale preached at night to a crowded house. We trust that Eternity will unfold the happy results.

MONDAY MORNING, 8 o'clock.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment. Prayer by Bro. Bailey.

1. Called for the report of the committee on Fellowship, which was read and adopted. Appendix, J.

3. Suspended the regular order of business and adopted the following resolutions in relation to the Tennessee Baptist:

WHEREAS, A. Campbell, in the late issues of his Harbinger, has declared that the Tennessee Baptist is not a correct exponent of the views of the denomination in the South-west; and

WHEREAS, He declares he is warranted to believe this from the private communications of Sundry Baptist Ministers whose names he does not give. Therefore,

Resolved, That we, the Muscle Shoals Association, do hereby express our

the Editor of the Tennessee Baptist as a correct expounder of faith and practice as Baptists, and as a *strong defender and lover* of this primitive Apostolic Christianity, for which we are so earnestly admonished in the Scriptures to contend.

Resolved further, That our Moderator be hereby requested by special communications to demand, either through the Tennessee Baptist or otherwise, of A. Campbell the names of those brethren who have informed him that the Baptists do not regard the Tennessee Baptist as a true exponent of our faith and practice.

Resolved furthermore, That we recommend all our brethren, if they are not, to become at once subscribers to the bold and uncompromising advocate and organ of our denomination South and West, known as "The Tennessee Baptist."

4. Took up the case of non-fellowship between Shilo and Gunter-ville Church. The correspondence was read and a committee of three appointed to visit Gunter-ville Church, viz: P. M. Musgrove, G. Fowler and J. Fields.

5. The committee on Education submitted their report, which was read, and Brother Graves being loudly called, rose and addressed the Association in an effective speech on the claims of Education upon our denomination, at the conclusion of which \$1500 was promptly pledged to pay the debt of the Baptist Institute at Moulton, and \$300 for beneficiaries at Union University, who desire to prepare for the ministry. See Appendix, E.

6. On motion, a committee of three was appointed to examine those desiring to become beneficiaries and superintend the funds.— J. Gunn, A. Houk and A. A. Burleson were appointed said committee, and Wm. J. Thompson Treasurer. Appendix, K.

Adjourned until 1 o'clock, P. M. Prayer by Brother Pomroy.

MONDAY EVENING, 1 o'clock, P. M.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment.

1. The committee on Sabbath Schools presented their report, which was read and adopted. Appendix, L.

2. The report of the committee on Missions was read and adopted. See Appendix, C.

3. The committee on the powers and duties of the Executive Committee submitted their report, which was adopted. Appen. N.

4. On motion, a committee of five was appointed to prepare the powers and duties of the Board of Trustees of the Baptist Association at Moulton, and to designate the manner of electing said Board and their term of office, and report to the next Association. A. Houk, J. Gunn, Wm. H. Barksdale, D. Bridenthall and G. W. Harget were appointed said committee.

5. The committee appointed to draft preamble and resolutions in relation to Brother Edmiston, report the following, which was read and ordered to be printed in the Minutes:

6. *Resolved*, That this Association tender to the citizens of Moulton and vicinity its thanks for the kind and hospitable manner in which its delegates and visitors have been entertained during its session.

7. *Resolved*, That Brother Graves be allowed an opportunity of presenting the claims of the Tennessee Publication Society and also that of the Southern Bible Board, located at Nashville, Tenn.

Brother Graves having addressed the Association at some length, Brother Wheelock was permitted to present the claims of the Bible Revision Association.

8. The following resolution was read and adopted:

Resolved, That in view of the great want of the word of God, especially amongst the Chinese, in Asia and California, that we recommend all Pastors of churches within the bounds of this Association to lay the claims of the Southern Bible Board before their respective churches during the month of December next, and collect whatever amount the churches may contribute, and remit to the Treasurer at Nashville, Tenn.

9. Adopted the report of the Executive Committee.

10. On motion, five delegates were appointed to attend the next Biennial Convention, viz: P. M. Musgrove, A. A. Burleson, Wm. H. Barksdale, D. Bridenthall and G. Fowler.

11. Instructed the clerk to distribute the Minutes in proportion to the amount contributed by each church.

12. On motion, the committee on Finance was instructed to pay the three Missionaries for six months' labor.

Adjourned until 7 o'clock, P. M. Prayer by Brother Carson.

MONDAY EVENING, 7 o'clock, P. M.

The Association met pursuant to adjournment.

1. It was moved and seconded that the Association hear the report of Brother Carson who had labored as Missionary without having been employed by the Association or Executive Board. After hearing said report, the committee on Finance were instructed to pay Brother Carson ninety dollars as a donation.

2. It was moved that the agent for raising Missionary funds be required to report the amount contributed by each church; also, to state what churches he failed to visit.

3. The committee on Finance submitted its report, which was read and adopted.

4. On motion, the pledges given our Missionary agent on the five years' plan, were released from paying the same.

5. On motion, a committee of three was appointed to employ Missionaries to labor the present year. Thos. Ashford, A. Houk and A. Jarman were appointed said committee, who entered at once on the discharge of said duty, and after retiring and consultation, reported the names of Brother E. Y. Vanhooze and Brother Wm. H. Barksdale. Brother Vanhooze accepted the appointment, but Brother Barksdale declined.

6. On motion, it was made the duty of those laboring as Missionaries to report their field of labor the ensuing year.

7. On motion, the following agents were appointed to distribute the Minutes, viz: G. W. Harget for 1st district, H. A. Owen for 2d district, A. Houk for 3d district, and P. M. Musgrove for the 4th district. Brother A. A. Burleson is to receive the Minutes and forward them to agents.

8. On motion, it was ordered that 1500 copies of the Minutes be printed.

9. It was moved and seconded that the Executive Committee be empowered to superintend the Missionary operations the ensuing year.

10. On motion, the following brethren were appointed the Executive Committee, viz: Thos. Ashford, E. R. Stanley, L. D. Massengale, H. A. Owen and F. C. Owen.

11. It was moved and seconded that Brother E. allowed \$20 for his services as clerk. yellow

12. On motion, it was agreed that the circular of the Baptist Female Institute at Moulton be printed on the back of the Minutes.

13. On motion, the following committee were appointed to assist the clerk in preparing the Minutes for the press, viz: J. Gunn, A. Houk and A. A. Burleson.

14. On motion, the Association adjourned to meet with the Mt. Pleasant Church on Friday before the first Lord's day in October, 1855. After prayer by Brother Verser and singing, the brethren gave the parting hand.

R. B. BURLESON, *Moderator.*

E. WINDEL, *Clerk.*

APPENDIX.

A

CIRCULAR LETTER.

BRETHREN: You have, by appointment, requested a letter on Church Discipline. The subject is always important; for with it is connected the usefulness and salvation of churches and individuals. For the lack of wholesome Discipline, how much our churches have suffered, in their piety, strength and efficiency! It is therefore especially to be regretted that the space, which should never be transcended in a Circular, is quite too limited for a full consideration of the subject. If, however, by an epitome, the subject shall in any degree become better understood, and its importance more fully realized, something will be gained.

What are the occasions which call for the administration of Church Discipline?

1. Unscriptural conduct. The Bible is supreme in authority; all acts should be tried by its teachings. There is no duty which Christians should perform which is not enjoined by either the precepts or spirit of the Bible; nor is there any wrong, any vice, or any sin which the Bible does not condemn. If, therefore, a church member be guilty of a private offence against a brother, or a public offence against the church, or, in general, if he be guilty of any sin, he must be tried, and acquitted or condemned by the teachings of the Bible. This is the touch-stone to which all actions must be brought—this is the statute book of the church wherein God himself hath prescribed the laws which shall govern the members of his Zion. However it may be with other religious denominations, with us, a Baptist has a right, on trial, to demand scriptural authority against the act with which he is charged; and that too, whatever rules and resolutions stand upon the Church Book. If the act for which he is tried, is condemned by the Scriptures, he must repent, or be excommunicated; if otherwise, he must be acquitted,—though a thousand resolutions are against him. It is indeed competent for a church to enact rules and regulations for the government of its members, but these enactments owe their vitality, their very life and force to the fact that they are faithful transcripts of the Bible. If such rules are accurately not a portion of the Bible, they cannot affect, they cannot touch a church member in the least degree for a single moment; for, let it never be forgotten, it is a maxim in our economy, that *nothing but the Bible shall govern a Baptist*. In a word the Divine Record is our constitution, therefore every rule, not according with this, is unconstitutional and an absolute nullity. Hence the error and folly of adopting and enacting an endless va-

riety of tests of christian church fellowship. One church will not fellowship a man if he be a Mason, or a Son of Temperance; and in some sections of our country, a man, no matter how good, how worthy and how christian, who is a slave-holder is bereft of fellowship and doomed to torment before the judgment day. Now such tests as these,—and it is the least that can be said of them,—are supremely ridiculous and gross abominations. No matter what a man's social connections may be, whether he be a Mason, or anti-Mason, Temperance, or anti-Temperance, Psychologist, Phrenologist or Spirit Rapper, if his principles and conduct are unchristian, bring him to trial, and acquit or condemn him by the teachings of the Bible.

But if we have urged that nothing but the Bible should govern us, we must also insist that that should govern us. Whatever is noted in the Scriptures as being unchristian, is an occasion for the administration of Discipline.—Here, alas, how delinquent the church! How many poisonous vines grow in the church, producing like the rank ivy, decay and crumbling in whatever they touch! How many roots of bitterness which absorb the vigor and strength and vitality of the church! There are those in the church living in the habitual indulgence of avarice, one of the most heinous sins which mortals can commit, and yet Discipline slumbers, and such ungodly, remorseless beings are lulled into the delusion that they will get to heaven. What a delusion! When the great Winnowing Day of Judgment shall come, and the wheat shall be separated from the chaff, the breath of God will waft their diminutive, shriveled souls into fire that is not quenched. Mercenary, miserable misers, with inflated lungs hypocritically talk of the full, free blessed salvation of the Lord's Gospel, just as if their rust-covered, money patched souls were capable of a gingle! Their hearts are avarice-eaten, worse than weevil-eaten, or moth eaten.

Avarice is, in the Bible, classed with the most enormous sins of which—I will not say christians—*depraved mortals* can be guilty. "No whore monger, nor unclean person, nor *covetous* man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, *covetousness*, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whispers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worth of death; not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Such is the dreadful group of crimes, in the very centre of which stands with all its rapacity and meanness, thin-lipped, hard-eyed, twisted-visaged Avarice; and God, as if the other fearful crimes in the catalogue were, by comparison, nothing, glances over them and fixes his eye upon the 'covetousness which is idolatry,' as "the abominable thing, my soul hates." What a sin that must be which turns the loving heart of God into hate? They re-

ceive every thing from God, and with reluctance give for his cause the merest pittance. The church is guilty for not lopping them off, as dry, sapless, fruitless, dead and decayed branches.

2. A departure from the faith of the Gospel, is also an occasion for the administration of Discipline. A church would be committing moral suicide, would be deeply culpable, if she admitted or retained persons holding notions at war with Gospel symmetry and piety. "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." "I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam,—so hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes which thing I hate." Now we command you brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

3. Occasions of Discipline sometimes occur from excommunications, and the subsequent conduct of the persons excommunicated. If an individual be excluded from one church, and he afterwards asks admission into another, what should the church thus petitioned do? They should inquire into the causes of his exclusion, and if it be ascertained that he was excluded for good reasons, the church which he has petitioned should not receive him, without true repentance. But if it be ascertained that he was excluded for unscriptural reasons, he should at once be received; for the first church having without Scriptural reasons excluded a worthy member, has forfeited all claim for a recognition of her acts of excluding him. It is a usage however among Baptist Churches to so far recognize the action of sister churches as to presume such action right until the opposite is ascertained. This usage accords with both reason and Scripture. At the same time, it is a principle fundamental in the church polity of the Gospel, that each church is an independent organization.

How should Discipline be conducted? Space will not allow us farther to amplify—and therefore we briefly sketch the remaining topics of our subject. For an offence private, or committed by one brother against another, the rule is laid down in Matthew: Private Remonstrance, Public Admonition—and, on the failure of these, Excommunication. For an offence to the church, the rule is much the same, the church, in remonstrating, acting by committee, Discipline should be administered *faithfully, impartially and in the Spirit of Christ.*

The Ends of Church Discipline. These ends are the amendment of the transgressor—purification of the church, and the preclusion of unworthy persons. Alas that our churches permit Discipline to sleep, thus leaving our beauty marred and our strength decaying and decayed. We are, I fear, my brethren, woefully remiss in disciplining those in the fold, and in scrutinizing those entering—The strength of the church is in her purity.

(B)

BAPTIST FEMALE INSTITUTE AT MOULTON.

*To the Muscle Shoals Association of Baptists, convened at
Moulton, Lawrence county, Alabama:*

On behalf of "The Trustees of the Baptist Female Institute at Moulton," and in conformity with certain resolutions passed at your annual meeting in October 1850, establishing the Institute, I beg to submit the following Report:

Since the last annual report of the Board of Trustees, which bears date the 30th day of September, 1853, they have had but two meetings, one on the 29th of June, 1854, when the resignation of Jesse W. Michaux, as Trustee, was tendered and accepted, and John N. Walker, of Moulton, was elected to fill the vacancy thus occasioned. The Board, therefore now consists of the following persons, viz: Thomas M. Peters, Isaac N. Owen, Amos Jarmon, Levi F. Warren, Charles Gibson, Aaron A. Burleson, James Armstrong, Eggleston D. Townes, James Wise, Isaac Van Eaton, Wm. McKelvy, John Prewitt and John N. Walker; of whom Thomas M. Peters, Isaac N. Owen, Amos Jarmon, Levi F. Warren, Charles Gibson, Aaron A. Burleson, James Armstrong, and Eggleston D. Townes, were members of the Board at the time of the incorporation of the Institute, on the 7th of February, 1852. The others have been since appointed by the Association or elected by the Board to fill vacancies occasioned by resignations.

In this connexion I beg leave to call the attention of the Association to the second section of the act of incorporation. It is in these words, viz: "That the number of said Trustees shall be thirteen, and they shall be elected or appointed by said Muscle Shoals Association of Baptists in such manner and for such length of time as said Association of Baptists shall think proper: *Provided*, That the above named persons and their successors shall always continue in office, until their successors shall be duly elected or appointed in their stead: *And provided further*, That in case said Association of Baptists shall neglect or in anywise omit to fill vacancies that may at any time occur among said Trustees, then said Trustees, (a majority of the number then in office concurring,) may fill such vacancy or vacancies as may happen in this body until the next regular election or appointment of Trustees shall be made by said Association of Baptists.

From this it is evident that the Association has the most ample power to control the corporation, by limiting the term of office of the Trustees, and upon the expiration of the term that may be fixed on, to fill the Board, by new appointments, with such persons as shall most surely keep the Institute within the sphere intended, at its establishment. Thus far, however, the Board of Trustees have not been advised what term of office it may please the Association to prescribe to them, or how they are to be assured that such vacancies in the Board as may be filled by them are acceptable to those most deeply interested in their action. To obviate embarrassments that may arise from this

source, it is desirable that some permanent regulation may be prescribed upon the subject, which may serve as a guide to the Board in their future action.

At their other meeting, on the 29th of July, 1854, the Board continued Eld. Richard B. Burleson as Principal of the Institute, until the end of the present session, which terminates on the 23d of December next; and accepted the services of Mrs. Susan W. Leigh as Instructress in Music.

The edifice for the Institute was so far finished on the 28th day of June last as to admit of being occupied for the purpose of the Examination, which then took place. For this purpose it was then occupied and has since remained under the control of the Board; though it is understood that some of the plastering has not been finished in a manner acceptable to the Building Committee, under the superintendence of whom the work has been prosecuted to completion.

On Monday, the 4th day of September instant, the School was transferred to the Institute Building, and there regularly opened under the auspices of the Board. The present number of scholars is thirty five, with reasonable grounds to hope that this number will be increased to forty or more by an early day in next month. And it is gratifying to add that the health of the pupils has been, as heretofore, almost uninterrupted by sickness since the date of my last report.

Owing to the fact that the accounts between the Building Committee and the Contractors who completed the edifice for the Institute, yet remain unliquidated, I am not able to report the precise amount of the debt for which the Institute is bound, and for which the contractors have a lien upon the building; but it is supposed to be not less than the sum heretofore suggested in my last annual report. Possibly it is needless for us to suggest, that, some proper plan for the ultimate payment of this debt should be advised at an early day as practicable, and pursued with energy and activity. And in as much as the Association deservedly enjoys a high position for the wisdom and prudence of its recommendations among those to whom we must principally apply for aid, it is earnestly hoped, that, during the present session, efficient measures will be adopted to relieve the Institute from the pressure of so serious and so threatening an embarrassment.

THOS. M. PETERS, Pres't of the Board of Trustees.

Moulton, Ala., Sept 30, 1854.

(C)

REPORT ON MISSIONS.

Your Committee on Missions beg leave to report, That although the system of Missionary operation adopted at our last Association, has not fully succeeded to the anticipation of its friends, yet we are of opinion that it is the best plan we have ever adopted, and we think with a few amendments it is perhaps

the best we can adopt. We would therefore respectfully recommend the following amendment:-

1st. Dispense with our agent and make it incumbent upon our Missionaries to take pledges and take up collections wherever they may labor—also our ministering brethren who are in charge of churches to take pledges and collect funds for missionary purposes; this they are not expected to do in person, but to do it through the deacons or by appointing an agent for that purpose in their respective churches. All monies collected to be returned to the next association with a report from each church, showing the amount collected, and also the amount pledged for future Missionary fund, and by this arrangement if properly carried out, as much or perhaps more funds could be raised than have been done the past year, and not incur an expense of keeping an agent in the field.

2nd. Appoint two efficient Missionaries to labor the whole year, devoting a portion of their time to assisting in holding protracted meetings, and when not thus employed, preach to the destitute churches.

Your Committee are further of opinion that an Executive Committee should be appointed of at least five members whose duty it shall be to preside over the whole Missionary operation, to fill vacancies should any occur, and to devise ways and means of raising funds, &c.

Your Committee have examined the reports on Missionary labor for the past year showing that Brothers Verser, Fields and Jennings, each labored six months notwithstanding they were in May last notified by our Executive Committee whose duty it was to preside over our finances, that they must suspend their labors from the fact of the ill success of our agent in raising funds; your committee report upon these facts that the Association may be advised of every thing connected with our Missionary service, and order payment as your body may deem just and equitable.

In conclusion of this already too lengthy report, your committee would suggest the propriety of raising a standing fund, any surplus on hand to be used in the purchase of denominational Books and Tracts to be disposed of by our Missionaries and agents at the various towns in our association.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

A HOUK, Chm'n.

(E).

EDUCATION.

Education is the spirit of the age in which we live. Truly, we live in an age of rapid improvement; men every where are crying *education education*; the arts and sciences are all advancing with the greatest rapidity; light and moral influence are breaking in upon us from all parts of our happy country, developing the *genius* and power of the human mind. Every where men are busy, persevering, enterprising. In all the high and laudable pursuits of life,

the tendency and watch word is, onward and upward. Education stands superior to all other attainments; save the *grace* that prepares the soul for Heaven, on account of its utility, its elevating and dignifying powers and happy tendency.

The world is awake upon this subject; almost everywhere we see the various denominations of professed Christians, orders of secret Societies, Towns and neighborhoods, erecting their Colleges and Seminaries, the grand object of which is to educate their Sons and Daughters, that they may be useful and happy. We, the Baptist denomination are doing much for the accomplishment of this glorious object. This Association has made a beautiful start in establishing a Seminary of high grade in our midst. Greater responsibility rests upon us now brethren, if possible for the completion of this building than did before we commenced it. It is a responsibility that we cannot shake off if we would.

Therefore *Resolved*, That we awake to a lively interest and more vigorous effort for the cause of education in our own Association, and that we rally around the Baptist Female Institute, located at Moulton, and take immediate and persevering steps to relieve it of its present embarrassment.

Very respectfully submitted.

JACKSON GUNN, Chairman.

(L)

REPORT ON SABBATH SCHOOLS.

Your Committee on Sabbath schools beg leave to report, That in their opinion the great importance of a well organized Sabbath school in every Church in our Association, cannot be too strongly urged upon our brethren. Notwithstanding we have again and again called the attention of our denomination to this important subject, we are pained to see from the reading of the letters from the churches composing this Association, but very few churches have engaged in the glorious work of training the youthful mind in the way of life and salvation. It is obvious to every thinking mind that the first and highest duty of Christian parents is to train their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and experience has well attested the fact that a well regulated Sabbath school contributes more to this grand object than any other mode of instruction. Your committee feel the importance of this branch of Christian duty, and but for the fear of being too importunate, we could offer many arguments in favor of Sabbath schools.

In conclusion your committee would respectfully recommend that our ministering brethren be earnestly requested to urge upon their respective churches their duty in organizing Sabbath schools, and furnishing them with suitable libraries. All of which is respectfully submitted,

A. HOUK, Chairman.

REPORT ON CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

Your Committee to whom was referred the case of fellowship in Blue Spring Church beg leave to report, That we have enquired into the state of that Church and find that two members have been received into that fellowship who had voluntarily withdrawn from Shilo Church to avoid fellowship with a portion of its members. Your committee are of opinion that this course was out of order and wrong in practice; we hold the doctrine that there is but one way to pursue for a member to change his membership from one church to another and that is by letter recommending in full fellowship. We are therefore of opinion that the Church erred in this and also in appointing a delegate not in fellowship, by which they violated the rule adopted at our last Association in the case of Guntersville church.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

A. HOUK, Chairman.

Your Committee to whom was referred the case of fellowship in Moulton Church beg leave to report, That in our opinion as no query has come up in the letter of that church, and as none of its delegation are charged with non-fellowship, all we can do as an association is to refer that church together with all others composing this body to our action and advice in the case of Guntersville church, that they may discipline their members accordingly, or be dealt with in like manner.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

A. HOUK, Chairman.

Your committee on the case of Fellowship in Guntersville church beg leave to report, That this case was reported upon at our last association, and acted upon by the association and advice given, which advice has not been kneeded. Your committee are of opinion that the Guntersville church is out of order and should be promptly dealt with by the association.

All of which is submitted,

A. HOUK, Chairman.

(I)

REPORT ON BENEFICIARY.

Your Committee who were appointed to consider the propriety of sustaining a young Minister at Murfreesboro' beg leave to report, That we conceive it to be, both the duty and privilege of this body, to sustain at least one beneficiary at Murfreesboro'; and that we recommend brother Napoleon Bailey as the man. We also recommend this body to take immediate steps to raise the requisite amount of money for the accomplishment of the object.

All of which is most respectfully submitted.

JACKSON GUNN, Chairman.

(F)

ELDER JOHN H. EDMISTON.

Your committee to whom was referred the drafting of resolutions in regard to bro. John H. Edmiston, beg leave to report:

Whereas, It was the pleasure of brother Edmiston to leave this association; and *whereas*, he has for many years past labored in our midst, most faithfully and efficiently.

Therefore Resolved, That we deeply regret his removal from our midst, and that our loss will be seriously felt among us.

Resolved, That we regard him as a high-toned gentleman, a zealous Christian and an able and efficient Minister of the Gospel of Christ.

Resolved, That we recommend bro. Edmiston to the Christian care and brotherly love of all Baptists with whom his lot may hereafter be cast.

Respectfully submitted.

J. GUNN.

P. M. MUSGROVE,

F. D. MASSENGALE.

(G)

REPORT ON THE POWERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

Your Committee on the powers and duties of the Executive Board beg leave to report, That in their opinion whenever it becomes necessary to appoint an Executive Committee their duty as far as possible should be specified by the Association, which duty they should perform, to the letter; said committee should also carry out all the business of the Association, and attend to its interest generally and report to the next association all their acts.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

J. GUNN, Chm'n.

(H)

REPORT ON DOCUMENTS.

Your Committee on Documents beg leave to report, having examined the letters of all the churches carefully, we find in the letter from Tusculum Church a request for advice in reference to destitutions.

2nd. A request from the Blountsville Church that the articles of Faith of the Baptist Church be incorporated or appended to the minutes of this association.

3d. Mount Pleasant Church request that the association recognize brother Napoleon Bailey as a beneficiary at School.

4th. Moulton Church requests a discontinuation of the present Missionary labors, and the appointment of a Colporteur for the dissemination of Tracts and Books.

5th. Florence Church reports entire destitution, having no minister, nor preaching for a year. All of which we respectfully submit.

A. JOHNSON.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

The Committee on the State of Religion beg leave to report. From the information conveyed to us by the letters from the churches of this Association it is apparent that there is a lamentable decrease in the warmth pervading our churches—religion is at a low ebb, and it becomes our consideration to consider well the causes which produce this low state of piety—the coldness and indifference.

1. A lack of number and piety in our churches.
2. The want of development of Christian piety in Gospel propagation.
3. The constitution of churches in too close proximity with each other, thus in a measure destroying the strength which we might derive from union.
4. The neglect of the proper education of the congregation.
5. The neglect of prayer, private, family and social.
6. The neglecting of Scriptural reading.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

D. BRIDENTHALL, Chairman.

REPORT ON FINANCE.

The Committee on finance beg leave to make the following report, to wit:

Balance on hand last year,	\$8.00
Amount of minute fund received at this association,	57.95
" " missionary fund received from Agent Edmiston,	716.75
" " do. rec'd. from Churches,	6.75
" " Public Collection on Lord's day,	25.00
" " Widows and Orphans fund rec'd. from Decatur church,	20.00
" Received since last Association for Books,	
" Received from Courtland Church for widows and Orphans,	20.00
Total,	\$854.45

All of which is respectfully submitted,

CHARLES GIBSON, Chairman.

CORRESPONDING LETTER.

The Muscle Shoals Baptist Association to her sister Associations. The Liberty Judson, Big Bear Creek, North River and Cherokee Baptist Associations, sendeth Christian salutation.

DEAR BRETHREN:—As we print our corresponding letter in our minutes, we hope you will receive a package of same with the messengers; we wish to continue a correspondence. Our session has been very full of business of deep interest as you will see from our minutes, and also the place and time of our next session. May the Holy Spirit direct you in the way of all truth, and finally save you in Heaven, is our prayer through Christ Jesus.

Yours in Gospel bonds,

R. E. BURLESON, Moderator.

ENOCH WINDEB, Clerk.

TABLE OF STATISTICS.

[illegible]

Com	100	100	100	100	100
Dec	85	2	10	5	31
Exp	100	100	100	100	100
Dis	100	100	100	100	100

CHURCHES.	DELEGATES.
Enon,	C. Gibson,*
W. W. WILHITE,	I. Kitchens,
Oakville,	C. P. McDaniel,
Moulton,	R. B. Burleson,+
R. B. BURLESON,	C. O. Gwin,
Moulton,	W. Boyd,
Cave Spring,	W. Ireland,
J. C. ROBERTS,	E. Devan,
	J. Johnson,
Oakalona,	R. P. Owen,
T. S. CARSON,	T. J. Carson,+
Avoca,	J. Crownover,*
Antioch,	No letter nor del.
Mt. Zion, (Lau)	W. G. Elkins,*
J. P. CHASE,	J. Byler,*
	M. Little,
Friendship,	J. McDaniel,
N. W. WILHITE,	J. Hunter,*
Oakville,	J. Simpson,
Mt. Pisgah,	E. Wise,
J. GUNN,	J. Burleson,
Decatur,	H. Reeves,
	W. Putnam,
Spring Hill,	G. Ware,*
	W. J. Thompson,+
Decatur,	J. Gunn,*
J. GUNN,	A. Houk,
Decatur,	A. A. Burleson,
Shoal Creek,	E. J. Halbrooks,
M. A. VASZA,	A. Ratliff,
Somerville,	O. Ratliff,*
Pleasant Hill,	D. B. Gregory,*
W. J. THOMPSON,	B. Roden,
Decatur,	D. T. Gregory,*
Flint Creek,	J. K. Lynn,+
J. K. LYNN,	J. Holney,
Somerville,	T. Halbrook+
Shilo,	E. W. Pope,
W. W. WILHITE,	A. Tapscot,*
Cedar Plain,	A. E. Pope,
Hopewell, (M.)	A. W. Nun,+
W. W. WILHITE,	J. W. Gibbons,
Cedar Plain,	N. Sandler,
Blue Spring,	J. St. Clair,
M. A. VASZA,	J. Weaver,*
Blue Spring,	S. M. J. Benson,

STATISTICS CONTINUED.

CHURCH	Ord. Min.	Lic.	Dis.	Exc.	De.	Whi.	Col.	Tot.	Con.
Salem in Mt.	R. W. Hales,†								
M. F. A. V. H.	M. A. V. H.	4	6	0	138	17	155	\$38 25	
Apple Grove	J. E. H.								
Mt. Zion in	W. V. H.								
W. W. W.	J. M. S.	5	1	0	1	0	0	31	3 37
Samuel Hill	R. A. H.								
Harmony	G. S. H.								
Blountsville	W. H. H.	3	0	0	0	0	0	13	0 13
Blountsville	W. H. H.								
Blountsville	J. Pullin,*	0	1	0	0	2	0	13	0 13
Blountsville	J. Miller,*								2 00
Mt. Tabor,	W. Fowler,								
J. Field,	W. H. Musgrove,*	11	0	0	2	0	0	37	3 40
Blountsville,	E. G. Musgrove,†								
Brown's Valley,	J. Whorton,*								
J. Field,	G. Fowler,	4	0	0	0	0	0	26	3 29
Big Spring,	E. Garrett,*								22 00
Good Hope,	F. Fuller,*								
J. K. LYNN,	J. Garner,	3	0	0	0	2	0	35	0 38
	W. Livingston,								
Blountsville,	P. M. Musgrove,†								
P. M. Musgrove,	W. Whaley,†	0	1	0	5	0	0	13	0 13
Blountsville,	J. Turner,*								15 00
Guntersville,	Letter but no del.	0	2	0	2	0	0	10	0 10
Harmony,	J. Field,†								
	P. Say,*	20	3	0	0	3	0	63	5 68
	T. Stephens,*								5 00
	R. Masteson,*								
New Hope,	H. H. Crow,	0	3	0	0	0	0	10	0 10
	P. H. May,								
Duncan's Creek,	J. Sherrill,								
T. S. CARSON,	H. Plarco,	0	0	0	0	0	0	67	1 68
	A. Tubbs,								
Concord,	R. Stanley,*								
	M. Watson,	1	1	0	0	0	0	8	0 8
Cherubusco,	B. H. Russell,								
New Friendship	J. S. Key,	11	2	3	2	0	0	32	0 32
	J. D. Key,†								19 75
Frankfort,	C. Womble,								
R. J. JENNINGS,	H. O. Landry,	11	13	0	0	0	0	24	0 24
	R. Rikard,								20 00
Total,		180	67	6	144	57	16	2213	866 3366 \$910 35

Ordained Ministers are marked †. Licentiates *. Absentees *.